

AGRICULTURAL PAST AND PROBLEMS FACING THE STATE

Serged Into Cotton Growing By Lure of High Prices in 1865, North Carolina Was Swept Into Rich Harvest of Brain and Brawn; Many Problems Yet to Face, But the Old North State Has the Goods..

(By W. A. Graham, Commissioner of Agriculture, before Southern Commercial Congress at Muskogee, Oklahoma.)

Upon the close of the war in 1865, the high price of cotton seems to have greatly influenced the minds of the farmers of the Southern States and induced North Carolina to become largely a cotton State; the cultivation was resumed on many farms where it had been abandoned and the gin-house and cotton press became unfit for use. The farmer was impressed with the idea that he could raise cotton and with the money received from its sale buy everything he needed, both necessities and luxuries, and there was no thought of economy. Cotton was the security required for advance of provisions on indulgence in accounts. It was necessary for the farmer to have advances in order to make his crop; and he was compelled to raise cotton. In this period the mortgage or lien on the crop to be produced that year was introduced; as security for advances of goods, especially supplies for the farm. But it was not confined to this class of goods; it was good as security for any kind of goods which the advertiser had for sale.

Thus the farmer adopted the one crop cotton system, more from necessity than choice. It is true the price of cotton was higher than had been in former times, but the price of what the farmer purchased had risen equally. The poet tells "that distance lends enchantment to the view, and robes the sky in azure blue"; so the postponement of the day of settlement gave the future a radiant hue to the farmer and he could but believe that "tomorrow would fulfill the expectations of today."

Long Time Credit.

Leaving the realm of poetry and coming to prose, he was like the negro who on passing a lot of clothing hung out to dry took a shirt. Upon being told he would have that to answer for judgment day, replied that if it was as long a credit as that "I'll take two." The farmer saw no need of practicing economy as to his purchases, thinking that prices would remain high and he would be able to settle for anything that he wished.

It is remarkable how long the farmer continued this custom, although each year he came out in debt, which he expected to pay by increasing the acreage of his cotton; and his credit was valued not by the amount of cotton he produced, but by the number of acres he had planted. Corn or other grain, stock or hogs, were not recognized as good security; the merchants preferred to buy these articles, which composed the larger part of his goods, beyond the limits of the State, or perhaps he was unwilling to let the farmers know the enormous profit he was charging on these supplies—fifty, seventy-five and even one hundred per cent for six or eight months credit.

This custom was almost universal when cotton was the principal crop, and it was generally true that the people were in straitened circumstances. At the same time, in most of the counties there were men who raised corn and meat to sell, and who had money to loan, made by this manner of farming. The trouble was that the farmer brought ruin upon himself by endeavoring to raise something to buy corn with instead of raising it upon the farm.

Unusual Lack of Cash.

When I became connected with the Department of Agriculture in 1899, the almost universal lack of cash with the farmers made them a dependent and not an independent class of citizens as they formerly were. This caused me to enquire if there was ever a time when the Southern farmer had any money or had this always been his condition. Being old enough to have been farming in 1861 (going from my farm into the Confederate army in 1861 and returning in 1865) knowledge of the condition of the farmers of that time answered my question—the farmer then was the most independent class of people; and when a man in town needed money, he did not go to some other city to borrow, but went into the country among the farmers and they had it to lend. Why did the farmer have this cash then and was in such bad financial condition now? The change had been caused by the different financial results in these days and at that time. Then the farmers raised all the supplies for his farm and generally a surplus of this class of crops: cotton and tobacco were his money crops, and what he received for them was not consumed by debts for supplies. It was net profit. Corn was then as now the foundation for farming. It was recognized as such by epigrams. An independent man was one who had corn to sell; a hat on the side of the head "looked like a man who had corn

to sell." A state of happiness and contentment was by the minstrels said to be:

"Corn in the crib, money in the pocket. A babe in the cradle, a pretty wife to rock it; Meat in the smoke house, and there I go to find it."

I have in my life attended many sheriffs' sales for debts, but have never seen the sheriff in execution sales offer a full crib of corn; and although I have called attention to this in nearly every Southern State, I have not found the man who said he had seen it.

The boys sang:
"All I want in this creation
Is a pretty little wife and a big plantation."

If ever I get back again, I lead a different life,
Save my money, buy a farm, take Dinah for my wife."

The Negro sang:
"If I had a scoldin' wife,
I'd whip her shures you born;
I sen' her down to New Orleans,
And trade her off for corn."

Two ballads, which generally express conditions of the times, at this time recognized farming as a profitable business, due to a supply of corn.

The institution of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture under power of the Constitution was authorized by the Legislature in 1877. The principal business from that time to 1899 was the analysis of fertilizers, as a very poor quality of goods had appeared in the State, the publication of bulletins, and exhibition of the products of the State at national and interstate expositions.

A Practical Farmers Board.

1899 the Department was by law recognized, to be directed by a Commissioner of Agriculture and a Board composed of one member from each Congressional district, with fourteen different departments of work stated. Shortly after this it was enacted that the Commissioner and members of the board should be "practical farmers engaged in their profession." The work of the Department was with the adult farmers of the State, those who were too old for school age and most of whom had had but very limited opportunities for education. Neither orator nor technical book could be used to advantage, but such measures as would cause them to think were required.

"To make men think at all
Is of all things the principal;
The second is of importance quite
Make them when they think, think right."

The third and then your task if through,
When 'tis done, think that is right
which they do."

The good book says that man should eat bread by the sweat of his face. Some one said brow. Many farmers seem to think that the brow was located on the back and that the amount of sweat produced was the main thing desired—use of the muscle, not of the brain. The brow is on the head and near the brain and would rather indicate work of the brain than of the muscles. Let the farmer learn the location of and use his brow and brain; not be like the Irishman who having volunteered took a piece of metal as a shield to the tailor who was making his uniform, and told him to place it over his heart. The tailor put it in the seat of his breeches. In the battle Pat concluded to "fight another day" and turned to flee. A bullet from the enemy struck the metal, whereupon Pat exclaimed: "Faith, and ain't it a great thing to know where a man's heart lies!"

To Use Brain With Brawn.

To use such means as would enable the adult farmer to recognize and use his brain was the object of the Department. The State could not wait until the boys were educated, but the development of the adult farmer, while giving the young people every opportunity for preparation to meet the situation when they should come to maturity. That the Department has made greater advances in its work than any other Southern State is due to the attention that it has given to the development of the adult farmer. He was the State's most valuable undeveloped asset and yielded the quickest and most valuable return.

In 1913 North Carolina stood sixth among the States as to value of crops per acre, \$24.84. Only Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey and South Carolina exceeding her, South Carolina being thirty-five cents greater; in 1914 she passes South Carolina by three dollars. She excels not only the other Southern States, but the States of the corn and grain belts which are generally denoted the garden spot of the nation where farming is most remunerative.

The Census of 1910, report on wealth, debt and taxation, reports the average wealth of a citizen of North Carolina in 1912 as \$323.90, thirty-seventh in rank; in 1902 it was

\$177.93, nearly eighty per cent increase.

North Carolina for five successive years has led the cotton States in amount per acre, 263 pounds of lint cotton being the amount this year; 315 pound in 1911; 267 in 1912; 239 in 1913.

The value of the agricultural crop of the State, including animals, in 1913, was estimated at \$241,533,670.

North Carolina is thought to be the only cotton State that does not import each year provisions for men and animals, animals for farm use, which could be raised in the State, to an amount equal to the money received for its cotton crop.

In 1910 North Carolina imports were \$59,000,000, while the cotton crop was \$54,000,000. The farmers took notice and in 1911 the imports of feeds had declined to \$39,000,000, and in 1914 to \$20,000,000. The fact that our farmers had produced the amount of feed that our report shows caused the North Carolina farmers to be able to weather the storm caused by the decline in price of cotton last year with less inconvenience than those of any other State. There was supported last year \$3,000,000 in feed and cattle.

North Carolina was 22nd State in value of agricultural crops in 1910, and 13th in 1913.

Home Owning Yeomanry.

Among the first problems to be solved now are to secure a home owning yeomanry on farms that make their support is the great desideratum, and that they may produce food and feed enough to supply the State. The State was prosperous under this system and we think will be again when it is restored. There is much truth in the old darkey's position, who was going along in ragged clothes and badly worn shoes, with a sack of flour under his arm and a side of bacon on his head. Being asked why he did not buy less rations and more clothes, replied: "Boss, when my back or my feet calls on me for supplies, I can put it off with a promise, but when this (putting his hand on his breast pocket) calls, I am bound to have the cash." Farms which furnish the cash are needed.

Co-Operation in Selling and Buying.

We seem to have inherited the characteristics of our fathers. The North was settled in hamlets where they were closely associated and interested themselves more or less in the affairs of their neighbors, while the Southern man went to his farm and seldom saw his neighbor except on business, hence the northern man is more easily brought into co-operation. Either trait can be developed to an extent which is unpleasant if not unprofitable.

There usually is as much in the selling of the crop as in the making and a good amount can be saved by co-operation which is now lost by individual handling. This has often been demonstrated; it is singular that the farmer neglects it. As I wrote the Secretary of Agriculture, the National Department can not formulate a system suitable to every section and pass it down to the farmers, but it must start in the neighborhood where the goods are produced and combine the farmers interested; then let two neighborhoods unite, then a township, county and so on. But the farmer is impatient; he expects to do things on his farm in a year that is about as long as he will quietly wait for anything. He is learning and this will come as he sees it is the practice of other professions, and the crop four or five years hence and not this year is to be the aim.

Right Thing At Wrong Time.

Co-operation or working together in all matters where there is a common interest. The right thing done at the wrong time or in the wrong way is as harmful as if the intention had been wrong. The following anecdote illustrates this: John on a trip to town bought a pair of pants which fitted him except they were two inches too long, thinking his wife could remedy this. Arriving at home where his sister and niece were visiting he stated what a bargain he had made and asked his wife to fix them so he could wear them to church next day. She replied, "John, you know this is Saturday night and that I have no time to fix your pants." After supper the niece quietly got the pants and cut off two inches to help auntie so that Uncle John could wear his pants to church. The sister thought, "I know Sarah is tired and I'll fix brother's pants so he can wear them." She got the pants, cut off two inches and hung them up. After eleven o'clock the weary wife, just as she had intended to do all the time, says: "Well, I'll fix John's pants," and she did and hung them up again; and each of the three went to bed feeling good that John could wear his pants. Next morning John arose, nursing his wrath to keep it warm, determined to wear the long pants so as to mortify his wife for not fixing them. He jerked them on expecting to find them clinging around his ankles and heels, but instead he found the chilly air occupying that locality, and casting his eye thither he discovered that he resembled a man going for a game of baseball more than going to worship. He jumped up and down and used words to express his feelings that you can not find in the largest dictionaries.

These three persons with the best intentions ruined a pair of pants and disappointed a man in going happy to church by not co-operating. The things done—cutting off two inches

were not only proper but necessary; there was too much of a good thing and it became evil, but it was the same to John as if they had agreed to ruin his goods.

Currency System.

A currency system that will furnish money to meet the increased value of goods by the appearance of the farmers' crops in the market—that they shall not suffer in price until the farmer has sold and that the new goods or crops be used as the security for the new money needed. This is another problem with us. It is largely provided for in the new act by making the warehouse certificates good security to borrow money. This is all that there is in the sub-treasury scheme advocated by the Farmers' Alliance. It is grateful to those of us who favor it to see this. The Government has confessed that the farmer knew from the first from what he was suffering and proposed the best solution—not "for something better," but the idea he advocated was the best remedy for relief.

WOMAN'S WORK FOR RELIEF OF BELGIUM

Publicity Chairman for North Carolina Issues Statement—Activities Are Being Increased.

Mrs. Thomas Settle, of Asheville, publicity chairman for North Carolina of the woman's section of the commission for the relief of Belgium, has issued a partial account of the work of the women in the relief cause as follows:

"Carefully tabulated and classified reports from all over the United States to the woman's section of the commission for relief in Belgium at 1 Madison avenue, New York, show that in the work of collecting funds to buy food for the hungry Belgians the women of this country, through the woman's section of the commission, of which Mrs. Lindon W. Bates is the chairman, are increasing their activities. The woman's section was created upon request of the ambassadors in London and the collective commission. It now has twenty-one national organizations. Twenty-eight State federations of clubs stand with it, and it has thirty-five states well organized. It seeks nothing for itself; it asks of its organizations that they focus influence and energy in their own facilities in co-operation with the efforts of the State committees. The last report to the commission shows that in more than 75 cities and towns during the week ending March 27, women had been busy in many ways carrying out their various plans to swell the relief fund. Some of these included a house-to-house canvass in Birmingham, the result being a collection of \$5,685.45; at Pasadena, toy banks and a "baby table;" Stamford, Conn., a sale of medals and Belgian laces; at Walnut Creek, Cal., a penny contribution netting \$11.67; Waterbury, a lecture; Washington, sewing circle meeting; Pittsfield, Me., a food sale; Showhegan, Me., a supper; West Paris, Me., entertainment in Continental hall; Muskegon, Mich., organizing of churches, clubs, and societies to solicit contributions; Minneapolis, Minn., a self denial day which netted the sum of \$1,044, turned in to the commission and an entertainment at the hippodrome netted \$500.

KING OF HOBOES RESCUED.

Overtuns Boat and Nearly Drowns on Way From Visit to Yacht.

New York Work.
George E. Carter, Jr., was entertaining 40 guests yesterday afternoon on his yacht Marguerita, anchored in the Hudson off the Columbia Yacht Club at Eighth-sixth street, when Jeff Davis, "King of the Hoboes," went aboard. Davis wanted to talk to Mr. Carter about a 450-acre farm, recently donated temporarily by Mr. Carter for use of the former Hotel de Gink lodgers.

A signal came from shore that more of Mr. Carter's guests had arrived. Davis said he would bring them out. He and L. J. La Blanc got into a rowboat, with Mr. La Blanc rowing. About 100 feet from the club float, Davis fell out of the boat, turning it over.

Swimming is not an accomplishment of the "King of Hoboes." He yelled and sank. Mr. La Blanc grabbed Jeff by the hair when he came up sputtering, and towed him 100 feet to shore.

"Some bath that," said Davis when he regained his breath. "Guess I'll go home," and he headed for the subway.

La Blanc was driven to his home at 215 Manhattan avenue.

"Life saving at this season is not in order," said he last night, still shivering. "I don't think Jeff suffered much, but believe me, I did."

The sections that are enabled to enjoy bird life the most are those that contain thickets of shrubs and trees. Birds nest and live in these and pay their rent by catching injurious insects and furnishing music. Many birds have brilliant plumage, which adds color and beauty to the thicket in which they live.

Short ladies should avoid much trimming on their skirts, says a fashion writer. Yes, and so should long ladies if their husbands are short.